

rather than saving lives. Political expediency, political cover and political posturing must not be the guiding principles on how we proceed in Iraq. Instead, we must be focused on the men and women we put in harm's way.

And everyone in this Chamber should be haunted by the fact that Congress has acquiesced too many times in one of the worst foreign policy blunders in United States history. Over 3,000 American military personnel have been killed in this war. Are we going to stand here next January and talk about the 4,000 or 5,000 who will have died? Well over 22,000 American troops have been wounded, some injured for life, and over tens of thousands of Iraqi men, women and children are dead.

It is long past time for this Congress to accept responsibility for having given this President a blank check and a free pass for nearly 4 years.

It is simply false to argue that placing any restrictions on funding for this disastrous war somehow shortchanges our troops. Redeployment from Iraq does not shortchange our troops. Bringing them home to their families does not shortchange our troops.

I will tell you what shortchanges our troops. Making them serve two, three or possibly even four tours of duty in Iraq, that shortchanges our troops. Failing to provide the veterans of this war with health care, that shortchanges our troops. Increasing by more than five times the backlog on veterans' disability claims so that those injured in Iraq and those suffering from PTSD don't get the help they need when they return home, that shortchanges our troops, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is no military victory to be had in Iraq. It is time George Bush ended his war and brought our uniformed men and women home. To do that, we must change the dynamic in Iraq. We must end our occupation, let the Iraqi people determine their own destiny and engage the countries of the region and the international community while we withdraw.

We can start by voting not to escalate this war, even if that means conditioning or withholding funds. I, for one, Mr. Speaker, will not vote for any so-called emergency supplemental appropriations bill that escalates the war in Iraq, that fails to offer a clear plan for when our troops will be coming home.

Mr. Speaker, the American people get it. They are far ahead of the politicians in Washington. They want leadership. They want us to do what is right. They want us to end the war.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIRE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO CORPORAL JASON L. DUNHAM, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KUHLE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUHLE of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is with honor and pleasure that I rise to recognize Corporal Jason L. Dunham, United States Marine Corps. Corporal Dunham will posthumously receive our Nation's highest award for valor tomorrow, on January 11, 2007, from our 43rd President, George W. Bush.

Corporal Dunham grew up in my congressional district in Scio, New York. He was known for his prowess in basketball, baseball and soccer at Scio Central School. He was also well known throughout the entire community, not just for the good-natured pranks that he pulled but for being a young man of enthusiastic yet humble spirit, someone who genuinely cared for others and could always be counted on if someone was in need.

He enlisted in the Marine Corps in July of 2000, because the Marines were known to have the toughest training but also the strongest brotherhood. He also felt a personal challenge to complete basic training and to do it well.

Following his first duty assignment with the Marine Corps security forces in Kings Bay, Georgia, Corporal Dunham was assigned to the Fourth Platoon, K Company, Third Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 7, First Marine Division.

Having quickly proven himself as a capable and conscientious leader, Corporal Dunham was assigned as a squad leader and therefore was entrusted with the training, welfare and the lives of nine American sons. He soon earned the reputation for his unwavering commitment to his fellow Marines. He had a caring, a respectful and a humane style of leadership and believed above all in leadership by example.

On April 14, 2004, while conducting a reconnaissance mission in the town of Karabilah in Al Anbar Province, Corporal Dunham and his men heard rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire erupting two kilometers to the west. Their battalion commander's patrol had been ambushed while en route to visit L Company at Camp Husaybah right on the Syrian border.

Realizing that his unit was in a position to assist, Corporal Dunham ordered the vehicles of his combined anti-armor team to link up with his dismounted squad and advance towards the engagement to provide reinforcement.

Upon reaching the sight of the ambush, they were quickly barraged with enemy fire. Corporal Dunham ordered the vehicles to dismount and led one of his fire teams into the village to neutralize the ambush.

After having moved several blocks south into the village, they discovered seven Iraqi vehicles in a column at-

tempting to depart to the east. Corporal Dunham ordered his Marines to block their movement and check the vehicles for insurgents.

As he approached the second vehicle in the column, an insurgent leaped out and attacked Corporal Dunham. In the ensuing hand-to-hand struggle, Corporal Dunham wrestled the Iraqi insurgent to the ground and immediately noticed that the insurgent was holding a live grenade.

Corporal Dunham alerted his fellow Marines and, aware of the imminent danger but without hesitation, he removed his helmet and covered the grenade, absorbing the brunt of the explosion and shielding the fellow Marines from a blast in a selfless act of bravery that most certainly saved the lives of a minimum of two of his Marines.

By his undaunted courage, intrepid fighting spirit and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of certain death, Corporal Dunham gallantly gave his life for his country, thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and upholding the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Corporal Jason L. Dunham epitomizes the selfless devotion to duty that our young men and women have displayed time and time again in Iraq and Afghanistan, Africa and numerous other places around the world. Our Nation is blessed to have a military full of Corporal Dunhams who are serving with great distinction.

My heart certainly goes out to his family, to the townspeople of his hometown, Scio, New York, and the Marines, for they have lost one of America's finest.

NO ESCALATION OF THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, in a few hours the President will address the Nation and talk about his plan to escalate the war in Iraq, to try and salvage the abysmal failures of his administration and the unnecessary war which they sold to the Congress and the American people.

Now, in leading up to this, just last month the President said, "It is important to trust the judgment of the military when they are making military plans. I am a strict adherer to the command structure." President Bush.

Well, I guess he is, because he is the commander-in-chief, and he is ignoring the advice of the uniformed services. The President's chief military advisers oppose this escalation in the war.

General John Abizaid, who was then head of all U.S. forces in the Middle East, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee November 15, "I met with every divisional commander, General Casey, the corps commander, General Dempsey. We all talked together. And I said, in your professional